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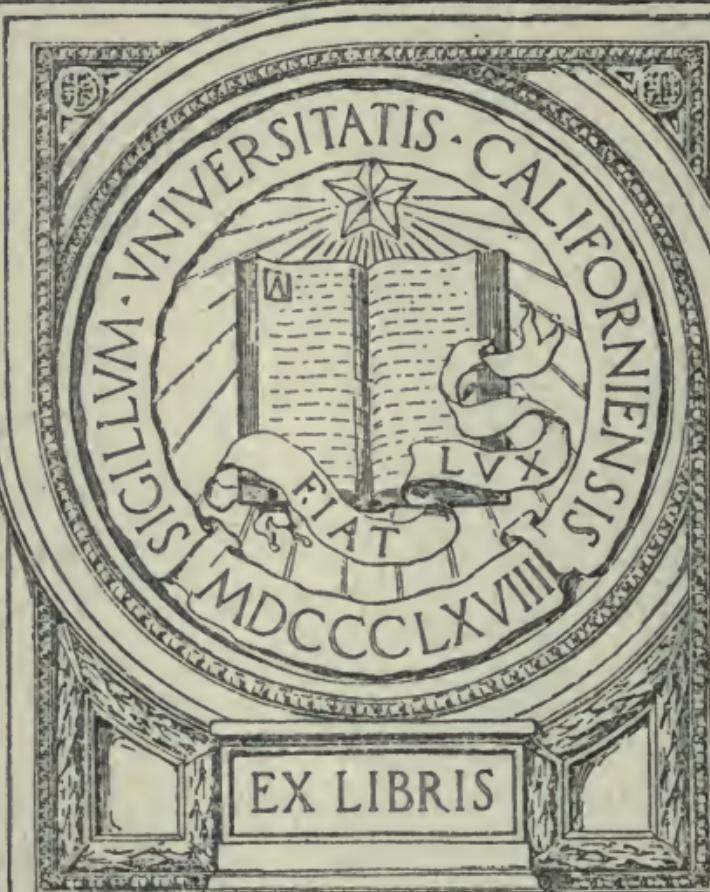
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EXPERIENCE

THE TALE
OF
THE WIMPUS

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ERNEST C. WILSON

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THE
TALE
OF THE
WIMPUS

EXPERIENCE

There was once a little bird called the Wimpus and all day long he flew about among the tree tops, or paused on the willow branches, to regale the Lady Wimpuses with stories of his great untried valor, as they enjoyed their afternoon worms; and the Lady Wimpuses were much impressed with the great valor of the little Wimpus, and were never more happy than when they listened to him tell of the great things he would do when the opportunity presented itself. It seems that he was possessed of a most

wonderful voice, of such extraordinary volume and intensity, that if he were once to use its full strength, the denizens of the forest would be paralyzed with fright and die of heart failure, or possibly neuritis. But the little Wimpus had a big heart in his little body, and so day by day, as the temptation to try his voice presented itself, he refrained lest he should depopulate the sylvan groves. He stayed his fierce impatience and contented himself by enjoying the sweet nectar in the throat of the honeysuckle, which he could reach with his long bill, and sang subdued love-songs to the Lady Wimpuses, and hadn't the heart to destroy them with his terrible voice.

And then one day, there came into the forest of the Wimpuses, a great soaring eagle, who had scarcely any voice at all, and the Lady Wimpuses grew afraid as they saw him from afar, and observed the great size of his talons and the spread of his wings. That is, they were afraid until they remembered the little Wimpus with the big voice and so they all gathered around him and told him of the devastator who was approaching. The little Wimpus laughed heartily when he heard their fears, and warned them to stop up their ears lest he deafen them, and assured them he would annihilate the invader when the time came. And then the time and the eagle both came together and with

them came the opportunity and the little Wimpus thrust out his little chest and opened his mouth and prepared to scream; but somehow something went wrong and the great voice of the little Wimpus didn't come forth and he tried again, and still there was only a little gasping noise such as anyone would expect from an ordinary Wimpus, and by the time he prepared for a third attempt there wasn't any little Wimpus left. And perhaps that is why the plaintive cry of the Wimpuses in the tree-tops of the sylvan groves is heard no more, and why people smile when their name is mentioned.

For the poor little Wimpus had

never had a single experience in his short little life, and had no way of gauging his strength of lungs excepting by his strength of spirit, with which it evidently didn't compare. So if I were like Aesop, the writer of fables, I would point the moral in the sad, sad story of the Wimpus who had never had an experience, and it might be something like this:

DON'T SHIRK THE EXPERIENCES WHICH TEST YOUR STRENGTH, FOR THEY MAY HELP YOU TO KNOW YOURSELF, THAN WHICH THERE IS NO GREATER BLESSING, AND PERHAPS THEY ARE TO PREPARE YOU FOR SOME GREATER EXPERIENCE IN YOUR LIFE.

Evidently there is no greater lesson in the experiences which life presents than that of learning to know your "own untried capacity;" for to know yourself is to know God, and thus all things. Man is not bound by the limits of his strength, but rather by his ignorance of what those limits are, and when he has added to his faith knowledge; he will discover that what he presumed to be his limitations were only the clouds of his own ignorance, which will disappear and fade away before his searching gaze of knowledge and Truth, as the piercing rays of the morning sun put to rout the minions of the night. Then may all the people of earth reverence and honor and pay homage to

him, and look up to him, saying, "Behold the Man!" for at last will be evolved a man who has discovered himself; who has explored the mysterious, hidden realm of his own Godhood, and has emerged triumphant to proclaim His own Divinity.

Fear and shun the experiences which present themselves to you, and they will haunt you and drag you down into the very depths of despair. Flee from them and they will pursue you. You may think you have evaded them, and rest in the sweet security of ignorance, but they will overtake you and the longer they have been delayed the more terrific will be their crash as they engulf you. They

will become attached to you by chains of your own forging, as Dickens' "MARLEY" was weighted down by his books and ledgers; his wealth and his greed; his penury and the suffering it had caused others. The Law is certain; its operation unerring and conceal it as you will your fear will find you out. For as long as you dread any experience in life, just so long do you need that experience, and it will come to you over and over again until you have discovered the good it held for you, and become grateful for it. Your fear will hold the thing feared to you.

Life is an eternal progression: therefore claim and know that what-

ever comes to you is yours by which to grow and progress and achieve. Welcome each experience as a loved friend---disguised perhaps beyond recognition---but a friend, notwithstanding, and it will prove to be so. There are no accidents in Nature. Whatever befalls you comes to you because it belongs to you, because somewhere in the subtle soul-quality which we call character, there is something related to the experience you have attracted. If there is nothing of combativeness in your nature, you cannot attract strife. If your soul is filled with a lasting Peace, discord and dissension can no more come near you, than can oil and water mix. If you purge from your soul all the elements

which vibrate with disease and in-harmony, these cannot affect you. It is only the lodestone that attracts the steel.

Experience is one of the means by which this purgation is effected. Experiences are the sacred, purifying fires that remove the dross from the soul; but if we shun and dread their fire, they will still burn, though the dross will remain. It is not that the experience creates quality within us: rather does it assist in bringing these attributes into manifestation.

Our greatest dread, although never or seldom expressed, seems to be that in bringing out the gold in our

natures, the dross will also be discovered, and we seem sometimes to dread development for this reason. We have much yet to learn of the laws of Dame Nature; and possibly in her code of values, the dross may be as important and valuable as the gold. If this is not so, why, then, has Nature produced so much more of the coarser minerals than she has of gold? There is an infinitely greater number of weeds spring up each spring than there are violets and roses. We are just beginning to entertain the idea that all things have a use, and someone has said that "weeds are only God's plants for which man has not yet discovered the purpose."

We bemoan the fact that we are thrust, by birth, into a life not of our own choosing, and subjected to experiences over which we have no control. We cry out in the voice of the Wimpus that Nature is unfair; that she is partial. And yet who can say that we, being eternal, imperishable souls, existing throughout and beyond all time, have not done the "thrusting" ourselves! And to whom shall we say Nature is partial? The one, who, like the Wimpus has never tried his strength against experience, or the one who has been thrust into the very vortex of trying events to try his strength, and discover himself! There is a something within us that constantly asserts that we are somewhat

better than that which we profess. We state weakly that we are creatures of Destiny, Chance or Fate, mere will o' the wisps, blown about aimlessly on the breezes of eternity, and our every other thought and word and action give our statement the lie. We look about us and see that every event of life, is the result of an Absolute Cause, and we can so often trace its source to our own beings, as to make reasonable the hazard that there may be a superior, interior self within us, far wiser than the humble, outer self we know, which guides our lives into the channels of expression best suited for Growth, and Unfoldment and Progress.

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